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shadow. . . . It is the swiftly stealing shadow of that mysterious eclipse which was to rest on intellect and literature till the end of the Western Empire. It is the burden of all religious philosophy from Seneca to Epictetus, which was one long warning against the perils of a materialised civilisation. The warning of the pagan preacher was little heeded; the lesson was not learnt in time. Is it possible that a loftier spiritual force may find itself equally helpless to avert a strangely similar decline?" How to make such conclusions "practically helpful" might tax all the resources which Mr. Bryce has at his command.

*The Early Institutional Life of Japan*, a Study in the Reform of 645 A. D. By K. ASAKAWA, Ph.D. (Tokyo: Shueisha; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1903. Pp. 355.)

THIS monograph, prepared in the first-instance for the Graduate School of Yale University "as a partial fulfillment of the requirement for a degree", is a valuable contribution to our knowledge of the history of early Japan. Indeed, next to Mr. Chamberlain's translation of the *Kojiki* with its invaluable introduction and notes, this volume by Dr. Asakawa is first in importance of works in English upon the period of which it treats.

The history of Japan has two great epochs, for which stand the dates 645 A.D. and 1868 A. D., the first representing the adoption of the Chinese civilization and the second the introduction of modern enlightenment. So alike are the epochs that the first reading of this account of the earlier reformation produces a curious sense of strangeness and acquaintance—as if one saw familiar scenes on a tiny scale, far away through a telescope reversed. Great differences, indeed, there are. In the earlier period there was no feudal system and in the second it was far gone to decay; moreover, in the first the movement while based on Chinese ideas, religious and political, was not hastened by the presence of aggressive and masterful foreigners; in the first, finally, all appears relatively simple and spontaneous, and the end is readily attained while in the second the struggle is complicated and prolonged.

Both centred in the restoration of the emperor to power, and our author clearly sets forth the source of his authority. He was the head of a conquering tribe which won the land by spear and sword, incorporated slowly the conquered people with itself and maintained warfare with the surrounding tribes. The isolated situation of the country and its sparse population permitted the process to go on for generations while there grew up the tradition of a divine commission for the family of the sovereign.

We cannot follow the story as Dr. Asakawa unfolds it, nor can we recommend his account to the merely curious reader. It is a book by a scholar and for scholars. Much of the work is here done for the first time and we are given the processes of history-making, with "textual

criticism and documentary analysis", instead of the smooth flow of a finished narrative. The work is the more valuable, for it is by no means the last word on the important topics of which it treats; in its own words it "is intended primarily for criticism and discussion, and only secondarily for direct information". Yet we are convinced that most of the positions taken will be maintained after the fullest criticism and discussion, while we are given information as direct and trustworthy as the sources at present available permit.

The emperor's power with the theory of the source of his authority, the nature of Shinto, the institutions of ancient Japan (say 500-645 A. D.), the struggle itself, and its results, are the chief topics treated. A long and deeply instructive chapter has to do with the political doctrine of China, a theme strictly pertinent to the main discussion, since the Reform of 645 A. D. was based upon it.

In conclusion we can but express our appreciation of the book by wishing its author a long life in which to give his high powers to the cultivation of this field of research, a field second to none in importance and in difficulty.

GEORGE WILLIAM KNOX.

#### BOOKS OF MEDIEVAL AND MODERN EUROPEAN HISTORY

*Essentials in English History.* By ALBERT PERRY WALKER, A.M., Master in the English High School, Boston, in consultation with ALBERT BUSHNELL HART, LL.D., Professor of History, Harvard University. (New York: American Book Company. 1905. Pp. xlii, 550.)

THIS new volume in the "Essentials in History" series under the editorship of Professor Hart is in many respects a model text-book of English history. Limiting himself to the presentation of only the more salient facts and features of national development, Mr. Walker has produced a most usable and teachable manual in line with the recommendations of the Committee of Seven's Report and abreast of the most recent scholarship. His practical experience as a high-school teacher has enabled him to arrange his material to the best advantage and to include only such pedagogical helps as will be of direct benefit to the teacher and pupil alike. The book has the further merit of conciseness combined with clearness, and pupils should find no difficulty in covering the five hundred and fifty pages of text in the course of one year. In fact, as the author suggests in his foreword to the teacher, an even more rapid survey might be made and be then followed up by review-work of a topical character.

Mr. Walker's arrangement of his material in the form of thirty-eight brief chapters, classified in groups under topical headings, and with continuously numbered marginal sectional headings, which avoid